

CHAPTER 401  
SPECIAL REGISTRATION PLATES

**761—401.1(321) Definition.** “Special registration plates” means those registration plates issued under Iowa Code section 321.34 other than regular or sample plates. Special registration plates shall be issued in accordance with Iowa Code section 321.34, this chapter of rules, and other applicable provisions of law.

**761—401.2(321) Application, issuance and renewal.**

**401.2(1) Original application.**

*a.* Except for collegiate plates, application for letter-number designated special registration plates that do not have eligibility requirements shall be made directly to the county treasurer’s office; no application form is required for these plates.

*b.* Collegiate plates, personalized plates, and special registration plates that have eligibility requirements must be requested using an application form prescribed by the department. Unless otherwise specified, completed application forms for these plates shall be submitted to the department at the following address: Office of Vehicle Services, Iowa Department of Transportation, P.O. Box 9278, Des Moines, Iowa 50306-9278. The office is located in Park Fair Mall, 100 Euclid Avenue, Des Moines. Application forms may be obtained from the office of vehicle services or from any county treasurer’s office.

*c.* The issuance fee, if any, shall be submitted with the application.

**401.2(2) Issuance.**

*a.* Special registration plates shall be issued only to a person who is an owner or lessee of the vehicle and is entitled to the special registration plates.

*b.* Special registration plates shall not be issued unless the vehicle is currently registered and the registration plates previously issued are surrendered to the county treasurer. Special registration plates are void if they are not assigned to a vehicle within 90 days after the date the department orders them.

*c.* Special registration plates may be issued to the owner of a multipurpose vehicle or motor home if the owner is otherwise entitled thereto.

*d.* Special registration plates may be issued for leased vehicles pursuant to Iowa Code section 321.34. The lessee must provide a copy of the lease agreement when applying for the special plates.

**401.2(3) Renewal.** Special registration plates are renewed at the office of the county treasurer of the county of residence of the applicant. The renewal fee, if any, is termed a “validation” fee. The validation fee shall be paid when the regular annual registration fee is due and is in addition to the regular annual registration fee.

**761—401.3 and 401.4** Reserved.

**761—401.5(321) Amateur radio call letter plates.**

**401.5(1) Application.** Application for amateur radio call letter plates shall be made to the county treasurer on Form 411113. The amateur radio license issued by the Federal Communications Commission shall be shown to the county treasurer at the time of application.

**401.5(2) Issuance.** If an individual to whom amateur radio call letter plates have been issued is a joint owner of a vehicle other than the vehicle to which the plates are assigned, and the other owner also holds an amateur radio license, the other owner may apply for amateur radio call letter plates for the other vehicle. However, only one set of amateur radio call letter plates shall be issued to each amateur radio licensee.

**761—401.6(321) Personalized plates.**

**401.6(1) Application.** Application for personalized plates shall be submitted to the department on a form prescribed by the department. The issuance fee is \$25.

**401.6(2) Characters.** The personalized plates shall consist of no less than two nor more than seven characters except that personalized plates for motorcycles and small trailers shall consist of no less than two nor more than six characters.

*a.* The characters “A” to “Z” and “1” to “9” may be used. Zeros shall not be used.

*b.* The personalized plates shall not duplicate combinations of characters reserved or issued for any other vehicle plate series under Iowa Code chapter 321.

*c.* No combination of characters denoting a governmental agency shall be issued.

*d.* No combination of characters shall be issued which is sexual in connotation; defined in dictionaries as a term of vulgarity, contempt, prejudice, hostility, insult, or racial or ethnic degradation; recognized as a swear word; considered to be offensive; or a foreign word falling into any of these categories.

**401.6(3) Renewal.** A validation fee of \$5 shall be paid each year. If renewal is delinquent for more than one month:

*a.* A new application and \$25 issuance fee are required, even if the same combination of characters is still available.

*b.* The department may issue the plates’ combination of characters to another applicant.

**401.6(4) Reassignment.** A vehicle owner who has personalized plates assigned to a currently registered vehicle may assign the plates to another owner of a currently registered vehicle. A written request for reassignment shall be signed by both vehicle owners and submitted to the county treasurer of the assignor’s county of residence. The personalized plates and a registration receipt shall be issued to the assignee by the county treasurer of the assignee’s county of residence in exchange for the registration plates and registration receipt previously issued.

**401.6(5) Gift certificate.** A gift certificate for the issuance fee may be purchased from the department using the prescribed application form. A gift certificate is void 90 days after issuance.

**761—401.7(321) Collegiate plates.**

**401.7(1) Application.** Application for collegiate plates shall be submitted to the department on a form prescribed by the department. The applicant may request letter-number designated collegiate plates or personalized collegiate plates. The issuance fee is \$50.

**401.7(2) Characters.** Personalized collegiate plates shall be issued in accordance with subrule 401.6(2) except that personalized collegiate plates are not available for motorcycles and small trailers.

**401.7(3) Renewal.** A validation fee of \$5 shall be paid each year. If renewal is delinquent for more than one month:

*a.* A new application and \$50 issuance fee are required.

*b.* The department may issue the combination of characters on personalized collegiate plates to another applicant.

**401.7(4) Reassignment.** A vehicle owner may request reassignment of personalized collegiate plates in accordance with subrule 401.6(4).

**401.7(5) Gift certificate.** A gift certificate for the issuance fee may be purchased from the department using the prescribed application form. A gift certificate is void 90 days after issuance.

**761—401.8(321) Congressional Medal of Honor plates.**

**401.8(1)** Application for Congressional Medal of Honor plates shall be submitted to the department on a form prescribed by the department. The applicant shall attach a copy of the official government document verifying receipt of the medal of honor.

**401.8(2)** Congressional Medal of Honor plates are limited to five characters. Personalized plates are not available.

**761—401.9(321) Firefighter plates.**

**401.9(1)** Application for firefighter plates shall be submitted to the department on a form prescribed by the department. The chief of the paid or volunteer fire department shall sign the application form, certifying that the applicant is a current or former member of the fire department. If the chief cannot certify that the applicant is a former member, a person who has knowledge of the applicant's membership shall sign the application certifying that fact.

**401.9(2)** Firefighter plates are limited to five characters. Personalized plates are not available.

**761—401.10(321) Emergency medical services plates.**

**401.10(1)** Application for emergency medical services (EMS) plates shall be submitted to the Iowa department of public health on a form prescribed by the department of transportation. The department of public health shall determine whether the applicant is a current member of a paid or volunteer emergency medical services agency and, if so, certify this fact on the application form.

**401.10(2)** A vehicle owner whose membership in a paid or volunteer emergency medical services agency is terminated shall within 30 days after termination surrender the EMS plates to the county treasurer in exchange for regular registration plates.

**401.10(3)** EMS plates are limited to five characters. Personalized plates are not available.

**761—401.11(321) Natural resources plates—letter-number designated.**

**401.11(1)** *Application.* Application for letter-number designated natural resources plates shall be submitted to the county treasurer. The issuance fee is a \$35 special natural resources fee.

**401.11(2)** *Characters.* Letter-number designated natural resources plates are limited to five characters.

**401.11(3)** *Renewal.* The yearly validation fee is a \$10 special natural resources fee. If renewal is delinquent for more than one month, a new application and \$35 issuance fee are required.

**401.11(4)** *Reassignment.* A vehicle owner may request reassignment of letter-number designated natural resources plates in accordance with subrule 401.6(4).

**401.11(5)** *Gift certificate.* A gift certificate for the issuance fee may be purchased from the county treasurer. A gift certificate is void 90 days after issuance.

**401.11(6)** *Distribution of fees.* Special natural resources fees are paid to the Iowa resources enhancement and protection (REAP) fund.

**761—401.12(321) Natural resources plates—personalized.**

**401.12(1)** *Application.* Application for personalized natural resources plates shall be submitted to the department on a form prescribed by the department. The issuance fee consists of a \$35 special natural resources fee and a \$45 personalized plate fee.

**401.12(2)** *Characters.* Personalized natural resources plates shall consist of no less than two nor more than five characters and shall be issued in accordance with subrule 401.6(2), paragraphs "a" to "d."

**401.12(3)** *Renewal.* The yearly validation fee for personalized natural resources plates consists of a \$10 special natural resources fee and \$5 personalized plate fee. If renewal is delinquent for more than one month:

*a.* A new application and \$80 issuance fee are required.

*b.* The department may issue the plates' combination of characters to another applicant.

**401.12(4)** *Reassignment.* A vehicle owner may request reassignment of personalized natural resources plates in accordance with subrule 401.6(4).

**401.12(5)** *Gift certificate.* A gift certificate for the issuance fee may be purchased from the department using the prescribed application form. A gift certificate is void 90 days after issuance.

**761—401.13 and 401.14** Reserved.

**761—401.15(321) Processed emblem application and approval process.** Following is the application and approval process for special plate requests under Iowa Code subsection 321.34(13).

**401.15(1)** Application Form 411146 shall be used to submit a request to the department to recommend a new special registration plate with a processed emblem.

**401.15(2)** The application shall contain:

- a. The applicant’s name, address, and telephone number.
- b. The name of the processed emblem.
- c. A clear and concise explanation of the purpose of the special plate and all eligibility requirements.
- d. The total number of the special plates the applicant anticipates being purchased.

**401.15(3)** The application shall be accompanied by:

- a. A color copy of the processed emblem.

(1) The processed emblem shall be limited to 3” × 3½” on the registration plate, but the emblem submitted may be of a larger size.

(2) The processed emblem shall not have any sexual connotation, nor shall it be vulgar, prejudiced, hostile, insulting, or racially or ethnically degrading.

b. A certification by the person who has legal rights to the emblem allowing use of the emblem. This certification shall also include a statement holding the department harmless for using the processed emblem on a registration plate.

**401.15(4)** The office of vehicle services may consult with other organizations, law enforcement authorities, and the general public concerning the processed emblem.

**401.15(5)** Within 60 days after receiving the application, the office of vehicle services shall advise the applicant of the department’s approval or denial of the application. The department reserves the right to approve or disapprove any processed emblem.

**401.15(6)** If the department approves the application, the applicant shall be advised that 500 paid special plate applications must be submitted to the department before the new plate will be manufactured and issued. If 500 paid applications are not submitted within one year after the date the department approved the plate, the department shall cancel its approval.

**401.15(7)** If the special plate is approved and at a later date it is determined that a false application was submitted, the department shall revoke the special plates. No refunds shall be paid.

**761—401.16(321) Special plates with processed emblems—general.**

**401.16(1)** *Fees.* Following are the fees for special plates with processed emblems:

Type	Letter-Number		Personalized	
	Issuance	Validation	Issuance	Validation
Persons With Disabilities	\$0	\$0	\$25	\$5
Legion of Merit	\$0	\$0	N/A	N/A
Ex-POW	\$0	\$0	N/A	N/A
National Guard	\$25	\$5	\$50	\$5
Pearl Harbor	\$25	\$5	\$50	\$5
Purple Heart	\$25	\$5	\$50	\$5
U.S. Armed Forces Retired	\$25	\$5	\$50	\$5

Silver or Bronze Star	\$25	\$5	\$50	\$5
Iowa Heritage	\$35	\$10	\$60	\$15
Education	\$35	\$10	\$60	\$15
Love Our Kids	\$35	\$10	\$60	\$15
Motorcycle Rider Education	\$35	\$10	\$60	\$15
State Agency-Sponsored	\$35	\$10	\$60	\$15
Veteran	\$35	\$10	\$60	\$15

**401.16(2) Application.** Special plates with processed emblems may be ordered as follows:

*a.* Application for letter-number designated plates shall be submitted to the county treasurer when the plates have no eligibility requirements.

*b.* Application for personalized plates or letter-number designated plates with eligibility requirements shall be submitted to the department on a form prescribed by the department.

**401.16(3) Characters.** Special plates with processed emblems are limited to five characters. Personalized special plates with processed emblems shall consist of no less than two nor more than five characters and shall be issued in accordance with subrule 401.6(2), paragraphs “a” to “d.”

**401.16(4) Renewal.** If renewal of either letter-number designated or personalized special plates with processed emblems is delinquent for more than one month:

*a.* A new application and issuance fee are required.

*b.* The department may issue the combination of characters on personalized processed emblem plates to another applicant.

**401.16(5) Reassignment.** A vehicle owner may request reassignment of either letter-number designated or personalized special plates with processed emblems in accordance with subrule 401.6(4). However, plates that have eligibility requirements may not be reassigned.

**401.16(6) Gift certificate.** A gift certificate for special plates with processed emblems may be purchased as follows:

*a.* A gift certificate for letter-number designated plates with no eligibility requirements may be purchased from the county treasurer.

*b.* A gift certificate for personalized plates or letter-number designated plates with eligibility requirements may be purchased using the prescribed application form.

*c.* A gift certificate is void 90 days after issuance.

## **761—401.17(321) State agency-sponsored processed emblem plates.**

**401.17(1) Application and approval process for a new plate.** A state agency recommending a new special registration plate with a processed emblem shall submit its request to the department on a form prescribed by the department. The application and approval process is set out in rule 761—401.15(321). The application shall include clear and concise eligibility requirements for plate applicants.

**401.17(2) Plate application.** Once new state agency-sponsored processed emblem plates have been approved, manufactured and issued, the plates may be ordered as described below.

*a.* When the plates have no eligibility requirements:

(1) Application for letter-number designated plates shall be submitted to the county treasurer.

(2) Application for personalized plates shall be submitted to the department on a form prescribed by the department.

*b.* When the plates have eligibility requirements, application for either letter-number designated or personalized plates shall be submitted to the sponsoring state agency for approval on a form prescribed by the department. The sponsoring state agency shall forward approved applications to the department.

**401.17(3) Characters.** State agency-sponsored processed emblem plates are limited to five characters. Personalized state agency-sponsored processed emblem plates shall consist of no less than two nor more than five characters and shall be issued in accordance with subrule 401.6(2), paragraphs “a” to “d.”

**401.17(4) Renewal.** If renewal of either letter-number designated or personalized state agency-sponsored processed emblem plates is delinquent for more than one month:

- a. A new application and issuance fee are required.
- b. The department may issue the combination of characters on personalized plates to another applicant.

**401.17(5) Reassignment.** A vehicle owner may request reassignment of either letter-number designated or personalized state agency-sponsored processed emblem plates in accordance with subrule 401.6(4). However, plates that have eligibility requirements may not be reassigned.

**401.17(6) Gift certificate.**

a. When state agency-sponsored processed emblem plates have no eligibility requirements:

- (1) A gift certificate for the issuance fee for letter-number designated plates may be purchased from the county treasurer.
- (2) A gift certificate for the issuance fee for personalized plates may be purchased by completing a form prescribed by the department and submitting the form to the department.

b. When state agency-sponsored processed emblem plates have eligibility requirements, a request to purchase a gift certificate for either letter-number designated or personalized plates shall be submitted to the sponsoring state agency.

c. A gift certificate is void 90 days after issuance.

**761—401.18** Reserved.

**761—401.19(321) Legion of Merit plates.** Application for special plates with a Legion of Merit processed emblem shall be submitted to the department on a form prescribed by the department. The applicant shall attach a copy of the official government document verifying receipt of the Legion of Merit. Personalized plates with a Legion of Merit processed emblem are not available.

**761—401.20(321) Persons with disabilities plates.**

**401.20(1) Application.** Application for special plates with a persons with disabilities processed emblem shall be submitted to the department on a form prescribed by the department.

a. The application shall include a signed statement written on the physician’s, chiropractor’s, physician assistant’s or advanced registered nurse practitioner’s letterhead. The statement shall certify that the owner or the owner’s child is a person with a disability, as defined in Iowa Code section 321L.1, and that the disability is permanent.

b. If the person with a disability is a child, the parent or guardian shall complete the proof of residency certification on the application or complete and submit a separate proof of residency Form 411120, certifying that the child resides with the owner.

**401.20(2) Definition.**

“Child” includes, but is not limited to, stepchild, foster child, or legally adopted child who is younger than 18 years of age, or a dependent person 18 years of age or older who is unable to maintain the person’s self.

**401.20(3) Renewal.** The owner shall, at renewal time, provide a self-certification stating that the owner or the owner’s child is still a person with a disability and, if the person with a disability is the owner’s child, that the child still resides with the owner.

**761—401.21(321) Ex-prisoner of war plates.**

**401.21(1)** Application for special plates with an ex-prisoner of war processed emblem shall be submitted to the department on a form prescribed by the department. The applicant shall attach a copy of an official government document verifying that the applicant was a prisoner of war. If the document is not available, a person who has knowledge that the applicant was a prisoner of war shall sign a statement to that effect on the application form.

**401.21(2)** The surviving spouse of a person who was issued ex-prisoner of war plates may continue to use or apply for the plates. If the surviving spouse remarries, the surviving spouse shall surrender the plates to the county treasurer in exchange for regular registration plates within 30 days after the date on the marriage certificate.

**401.21(3)** Personalized plates with an ex-prisoner of war processed emblem are not available.

**761—401.22(321) National guard plates.** Application for special plates with a national guard processed emblem shall be submitted to the department on a form prescribed by the department. The unit commander of the applicant shall sign the application form confirming that the applicant is a member of the Iowa national guard.

**761—401.23(321) Pearl Harbor plates.** Application for special plates with a Pearl Harbor processed emblem shall be submitted to the department on a form prescribed by the department. The applicant shall attach a copy of an official government document verifying that the applicant was stationed at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, as a member of the armed forces on December 7, 1941.

**761—401.24(321) Purple Heart, Silver Star and Bronze Star plates.** Application for special plates with a Purple Heart, Silver Star, or Bronze Star processed emblem shall be submitted to the department on a form prescribed by the department. To verify receipt of the medal, the applicant shall attach a copy of one of the following:

1. The official military order confirming the medal.
2. The report of discharge or federal Form DD214.
3. Other documentation approved by the Iowa office of the adjutant general.

**761—401.25(321) U.S. armed forces retired plates.** Application for special plates with a United States armed forces retired processed emblem shall be submitted to the department on a form prescribed by the department. To verify retirement from the United States armed forces after service of 20 years or longer, or to verify service for a minimum of 10 years and receipt of an honorable discharge from service due to a medical disqualification, the applicant shall attach a copy of one of the following:

1. The official military order confirming retirement from the armed forces.
2. The report of discharge or federal Form DD214.
3. Other documentation approved by the Iowa office of the adjutant general.

**761—401.26** Reserved.

**761—401.27(321) Iowa heritage plates.** Application for letter-number designated plates with an Iowa heritage processed emblem shall be submitted to the county treasurer. Application for personalized plates with an Iowa heritage processed emblem shall be submitted to the department on a form prescribed by the department.

**761—401.28(321) Education plates.** Application for letter-number designated special plates with an education processed emblem shall be submitted to the county treasurer. Application for personalized plates with an education processed emblem shall be submitted to the department on a form prescribed by the department.

**761—401.29(321) Love our kids plates.** Application for letter-number designated plates with a love our kids processed emblem shall be submitted to the county treasurer. Application for personalized plates with a love our kids processed emblem shall be submitted to the department on a form prescribed by the department.

**761—401.30(321) Motorcycle rider education plates.** Application for letter-number designated plates with a motorcycle rider education processed emblem shall be submitted to the county treasurer. Application for personalized plates with a motorcycle rider education processed emblem shall be submitted to the department on a form prescribed by the department.

**761—401.31(321) Veteran plates.** Application for special plates with a veteran processed emblem shall be submitted to the commission of veterans affairs on a form prescribed by the department of transportation. The commission of veterans affairs shall determine whether the applicant is a veteran and, if so, certify this fact on the application form.

**761—401.32 to 401.34** Reserved.

**761—401.35(321) Additional information.**

**401.35(1) *Surrender of special registration plates assigned to a vehicle.***

*a.* When ownership of a vehicle is transferred or assigned to another person, the owner must surrender the special registration plates to the county treasurer or assign the plates to another vehicle owned or leased by the person to whom issued.

*b.* When the lease for a vehicle is terminated, the lessee must surrender the special registration plates to the county treasurer or assign the plates to another vehicle owned or leased by the person to whom issued. Regular registration plates shall be reissued at no charge. Fees for issuing Congressional Medal of Honor plates shall be prorated for the remainder of the registration year.

**401.35(2) *Revocation of special registration plates.*** Special registration plates shall be revoked if they have been issued in conflict with the statutes or rules governing their issuance. Revoked plates shall be surrendered to the department within 30 days of the date of revocation.

**401.35(3) *Refund of fees.*** No refund of fees for special registration plates shall be allowed unless the special plates were issued in conflict with the statutes or rules governing their issuance.

These rules are intended to implement Iowa Code sections 321.34, 321.166 and 321L.1 and 1999 Iowa Acts, House File 200, House File 737, section 8, and Senate File 462, section 15.

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